

Great Sacred Music

Sunday, July 10, 2022

Guillaume Dufay: Tibi, Christe, splendor patris
Currende, Erick van Nevel

Gabriel Faure: Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11
Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill
Stephen Farr, organ

Francis Poulenc: Salve Regina
Cambridge Singers, John Rutter

Currende is a Belgian early music ensemble which was founded in 1974. Gabriel Fauré composed in 1864-65 at age 19. French composer Francis Poulenc's setting of the Marian motet Salve Regina dates from 1941.

Charles Gounod: Repentance
Orchestra of the Toulouse Capitole, Michel Plasson
Roberto Alagna, tenor

Marcel Grandjany: Aria in Classic Style for Harp and Organ, Op. 19
Jon Gillock, organ; Kathleen Bride, harp

Written in 1893 after his grandson had died, “Repentir” expresses Charles Gounod’s feelings of sadness at the youngster’s passing. We know the song as “O Divine Redeemer.” Born in France in 1891, Marcel Georges Lucien Grandjany emigrated to the U.S. in 1936 to be the head of the harp department at The Julliard School. He held that position until his death in 1975.

Commentary: The Rt. Rev. Peter Lee (May 11, 1938- July 2, 2022)

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford: Justorum animae, Op. 38
Worcester Cathedral Choir, Donald Hunt

H. Walford Davies: Psalm 121 and Requiem aeternam
Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Timothy Brown

“Justorum animae” translates as “Souls of the Righteous”. This is one of three unaccompanied motets Stanford wrote in the late 1880s. Walford Davies setting of Psalm 121 (I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help) paired with the reassuring words of the Lux Aeternam affirms the belief Christians have in life everlasting.

Pierre de Manchicourt: Laudate Dominum
Huelgas Ensemble, Paul van Nevel

Olivier Messiaen: O sacrum convivium
Cambridge Singers, John Rutter

Joseph Jongen: Toccata from Symphonie Concertante
Virgil Fox, organ

Franco-Flemish composer Pierre de Manchicourt (c. 1510 – October 5, 1564) emigrated to Spain where he was master of the music in the Flemish Chapel of King Philip II. O sacrum convivium (O sacred feast) is the only sacred choral work French composer Olivier Messiaen composed. It dates from 1937. Rodman Wanamaker commissioned Joseph Jongen to write his Symphonie Concertante for the opening of the organ in the Grand Court of his department store in Philadelphia in 1926.

J.S. Bach: Cantata 177, "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ"
Holland Boys' Choir; Netherlands Bach Collegium, Pieter Jan Leusink
Ruth Holton, soprano; Sytse Buwalde, alto; Marcel Beekman, tenor; Bas Ramselaar, bass

This cantata was written for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity and first performed on July 6, 1732. The opening movement sounds simple enough. It begins with a short sinfonia. That is followed by a masterpiece of writing so typical of the middle-aged Bach. The chorale tune sung by sopranos with oboes in unison is adorned with a finely-wrought counterpoint. The movement concludes as it began with the sinfonia.

Andre Caplet: The Mirror of Joy from The Mirror of Jesus
Quatuor Sine Nomine; Vocal Ensemble of Lausanne, Jean-Claude Fasel
Marie-Claude Chappuis, mezzo-soprano; Anne Bassand, harp; Marc-Antoine Bonanomi, double bass

"Le Miroir de Jesus" is a tryptich on the Mysteries of the Rosary, with text by Henri Gheon. The sections are "The Mirror of Joy", "The Mirror of Suffering" and "The Mirror of Glory." French composer Andre Caplet (1878-1925) was a close friend of Claude Debussy.

Jehan Alain: Litanies
Eric Lebrun, organ

French composer Jehan Alain (1911-1940) came from a very musical family which included his famous organist sister, Marie-Claire Alain. Tragically, Jehan Alain's life was cut short when he was killed in World War II.

Louis Vierne: Messe solennelle, Op 16
Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys; St. Thomas Brass, John Scott
Jeremy Bruns, organ

"The Messe solennelle op. 16 for mixed choir and two organs by Louis Vierne was composed in 1899. At its world premiere in St. Sulpice in December 1901 Charles-Marie Widor played the main organ and Vierne the choir organ. The work belongs to the highlights of the late Romantic organ masses and more-over is comfortable for the choir to sing." Source: Carus-Verlag

Antoine de Fevin: Missa Salve sancta parens
The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice

"The French composer Antoine de Fevin was born around 1470 probably at Arras, where his father was an Alderman (although one source describes Antoine as being of Orleans), and he seems to have died by 1512, possibly late in 1511. He is therefore of that generation of Franco-Flemish polyphonists which

thrived between Josquin and Palestrina." Source: Early Music Review

Charles Gounod: St. Cecilia Mass

New Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir of Radio France, Georges Prêtre

Barbara Hendricks, soprano; Laurence Dale, tenor; Jean-Philippe Lafont, bass; Jean-Louis Gil, organ

French composer Charles Gounod (1818-1893) wrote over twelve operas and six oratorios. But like Johann Pachelbel who is remembered solely for his Canon in D, Gounod's reputation rests on an "Ave Maria" which he wrote based on a prelude of Johann Sebastian Bach. Gounod's St. Cecilia Mass was first performed on St. Cecilia's Day, November 22 in 1855.